

Bloomberg School of Public Health

Center for Gun Policy and Research
624 North Broadway, 5th Floor
Baltimore, Maryland 21205-1996

September 8, 2015

The Honorable Elijah E. Cummings
Member of Congress
2235 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Patrick Meehan
Member of Congress
204 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Peter King
Member of Congress
339 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Michael Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress
2400 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Carolyn Maloney
Member of Congress
418 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Robin Kelly
Member of Congress
1239 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Dan Donovan
Member of Congress
1725 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representatives Cummings, Meehan, King, Fitzpatrick, Maloney, Kelly, and Donovan:

I direct the Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Policy and Research, and have been studying gun violence for more than twenty years. Much of my research has focused on illegal gun sales and acquisition, and strategies to reduce the diversion of guns to criminals. The opinions stated in this letter are mine alone, and do not necessarily represent the views of Johns Hopkins University.

This letter is written to indicate my support for the Gun Trafficking Prevention Act of 2015. Illegal gun trafficking is a major contributor to our nation's staggering rate of gun violence, and why the rate of firearm homicides in the United States is twenty times higher than that of the average high-income country.



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In the recently published book that I co-edited and contributed several chapters to, *Reducing Gun Violence in America: Informing Policy with Evidence and Analysis*, experts identified numerous weaknesses in current federal gun laws. In one chapter of this book, renowned criminologist and gun trafficking expert Anthony Braga, and Peter Gagliardi, a former ATF special agent, highlight the fact that ATF agents and federal prosecutors are limited in their capacity to combat gun trafficking, because there are no specific statutes specifically defining gun trafficking and making it a federal crime. Further, penalties for current violations related to trafficking (e.g., providing false information on an ATF form) are insufficient to deter gun trafficking, and do not reflect the seriousness of the crime.

Although public support is mixed for some gun laws, there is widespread support among gun owners and non-gun-owners, regardless of party affiliation, for strengthening gun laws designed to keep guns from criminals and for better enforcement of gun laws. The Gun Trafficking Prevention Act of 2015 would bolster federal law enforcement's ability to combat illegal gun trafficking that supplies guns to gangs and other violent criminals, and thereby help to curb gun violence in America.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Daniel W. Webster", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Daniel W. Webster, Sc.D., M.P.H.
Director and Professor